



*Top: detached ADU on right. Bottom: detached ADU on left. The colors of the detached ADU are complementary to the main home without exactly matching it.*



*Clever design makes limited space more livable.*



*The view from the top floor of the detached ADU looks down into the neighbors back yard. A new "skinny" house is also visible in the distance.*

# Licton Springs Detached ADU

Site Address: 8540 Interlake Ave N

Zoning: Single Family 5000

Neighborhood Impact Survey Results

41%	22%	37%
Bad	Neutral	Good

## Project Overview

This detached ADU project in the Licton Springs neighborhood near Green Lake replaced an existing accessory dwelling unit in a detached structure with a larger dwelling. The main structure is a Craftsman-style home constructed in 1921 on a 49- by 107-foot lot. The lot is zoned single family and is across the street from Lowrise 1 multifamily zoning, several blocks from the busy and congested intersection of N 85th Street and Aurora Avenue N. Much of the housing in this area are rentals.

The new detached ADU is approximately the same footprint of the old; however, the new structure is two stories tall. The detached ADU continues to house the same tenant who lived in the previous structure since 1988. It sits five feet from the rear lot line and four feet from the side lot line, and is 19 feet tall at the top of its roof pitch. When the detached ADU was developed, a parking space was added, providing one space for the main home and one for the detached ADU. The parking is located on a driveway adjacent to the house, leading to the detached ADU.

The color of the detached ADU does not match but does complement the main structure. It offers a similar roof pitch, similarly scaled windows, and matching window trim. The design reduces the appearance of bulk on its north side by lowering the bottom of the roof pitch and notching the footprint back at its



*The detached ADU is visible at the end of the driveway, behind the primary structure.*



corners. This detached ADU has the smallest bulk relative to the size of the lot it is on among all the selected projects.

Viewed from the neighbor adjacent to the rear lot line (to the east), the height of the structure may seem somewhat imposing, and this is further accentuated by its slightly higher elevation and the lightly colored, contrasting second story. The installation of a fence has

been helpful in alleviating this - as would the use of opaque glass in the window facing the neighbor's back yard.

## Process Evaluation

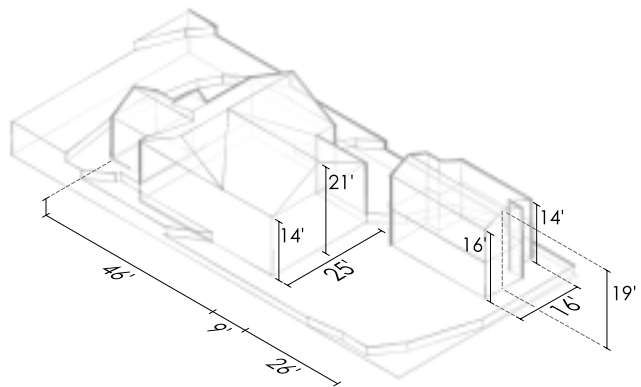
### Application Excerpt

"I dedicated three evenings distributing information and talking to my neighbors. A handout provided each person with project specific information and the intentions of the Design Demonstration Project competition. We met for a total of approximately 6 hours reviewing drawings, models, photos, and existing site conditions. Out of all the people surveyed not one was opposed to the idea of rebuilding the detached ADU. In fact the majority expressed that they couldn't understand why it was not legal to begin with."

### Demonstration Program Selection

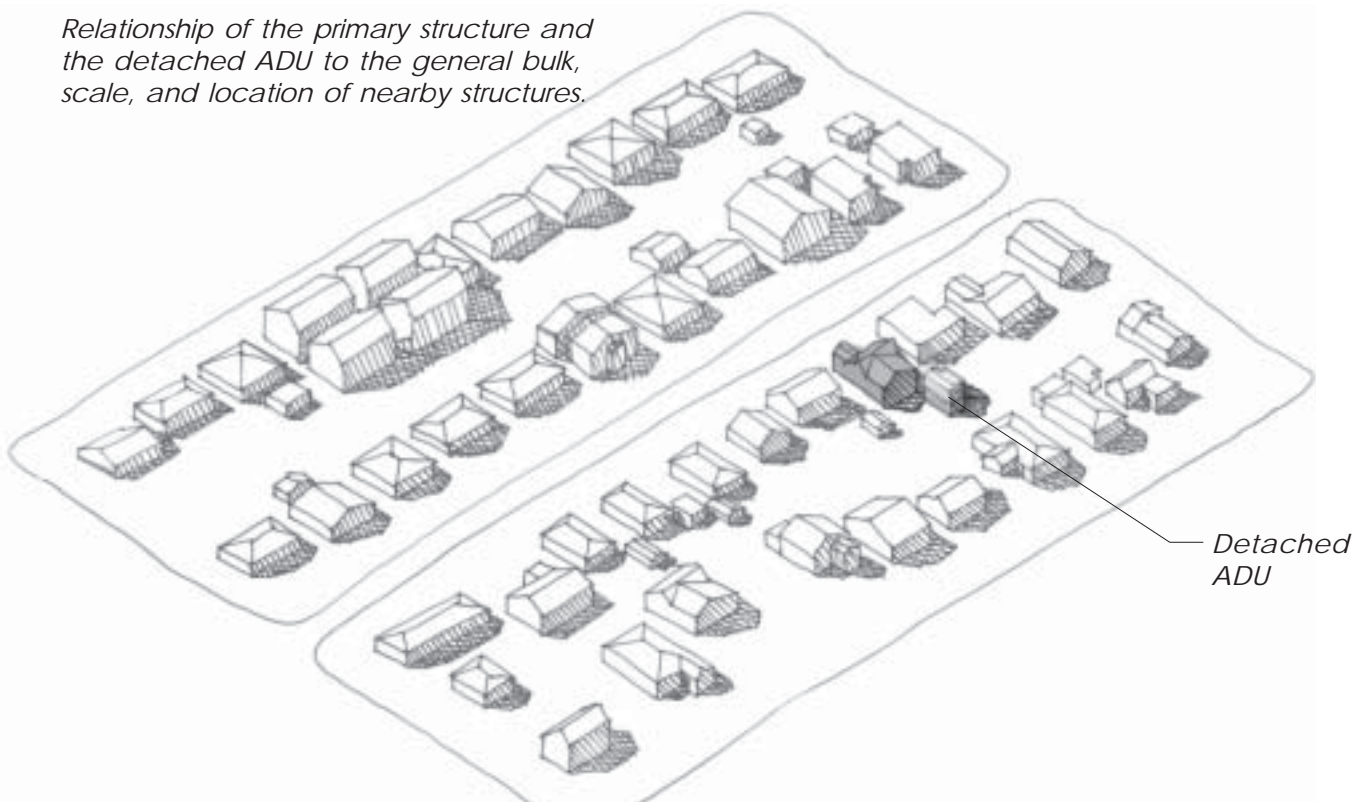
**This project was selected as a "should be built" in the 1999 AIA Design Demonstration Project competition. DCLU received only one letter of**

opposition during the comment period required for the Demonstration Program, and the applicant included signatures from several people that were supportive of the project in their original Demonstration Program application.



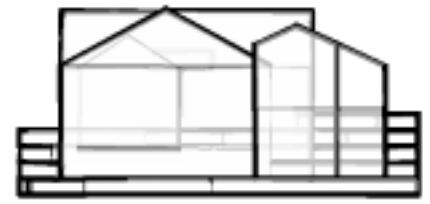
*Detached ADU relationship to primary structure*

*Relationship of the primary structure and the detached ADU to the general bulk, scale, and location of nearby structures.*

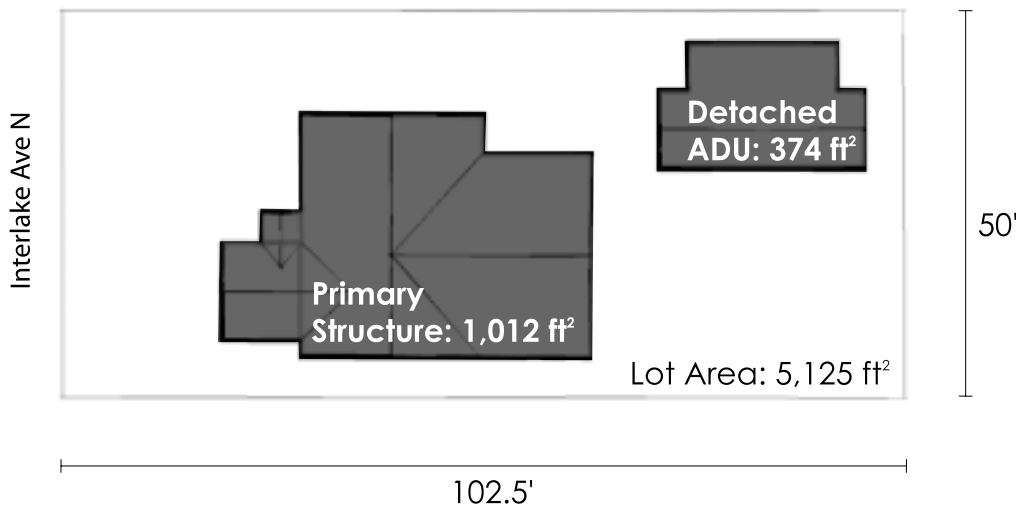




*South Elevation*



*East Elevation*



*Total Lot Coverage = 27%*

### Development Standard Departures

Approximately seven extra feet of height beyond what is allowed for accessory structures was granted to accommodate a bedroom and bathroom. This amount of height was found to not create excessive shadowing of the neighboring properties.

The applicant originally requested a two foot side yard setback, which would have provided insufficient space to maintain the detached ADU, unless a side yard easement had been agreed to by the neighbor. The applicant accepted the guidance of the Department and increased the side setback to four feet.

The required rear yard setback for this lot would be 20.4 feet. The Department suggested that the applicant increase the rear setback from the proposed four feet, and the applicant

responded with photographs and diagrams that showed an old lilac tree that would be lost if the building had to be moved closer to the street. It is also most efficient for the detached ADU to be as far back in the corner of the lot as possible, in order to maximize the usable open space on the site. The neighbor to the east has a small shed near the property line. Setting the cottage five feet from the rear property line was found to be neither disruptive to the integrity of the project site nor the neighboring property to the east.

### Application of Design Guidelines

A Land Use Planner provided the following design guidance to assist the project in meeting the intent of the Citywide Design Guidelines:



- Some increase in the setbacks may be required unless easement agreements with the neighbors are recorded.
- To reduce the appearance of a full two-story residence, the upper level should be integrated under the roof.
- The pitch of the roof should be increased to be in keeping with that of the main house.
- Windows and other elements of the structure should be placed more in line with each other.
- The massing of the building should appear more traditionally residential.



*The inclusion of this flower bed was suggested in the Administrative Design Review process.*

#### *Licton Springs Detached ADU Project Statistics*

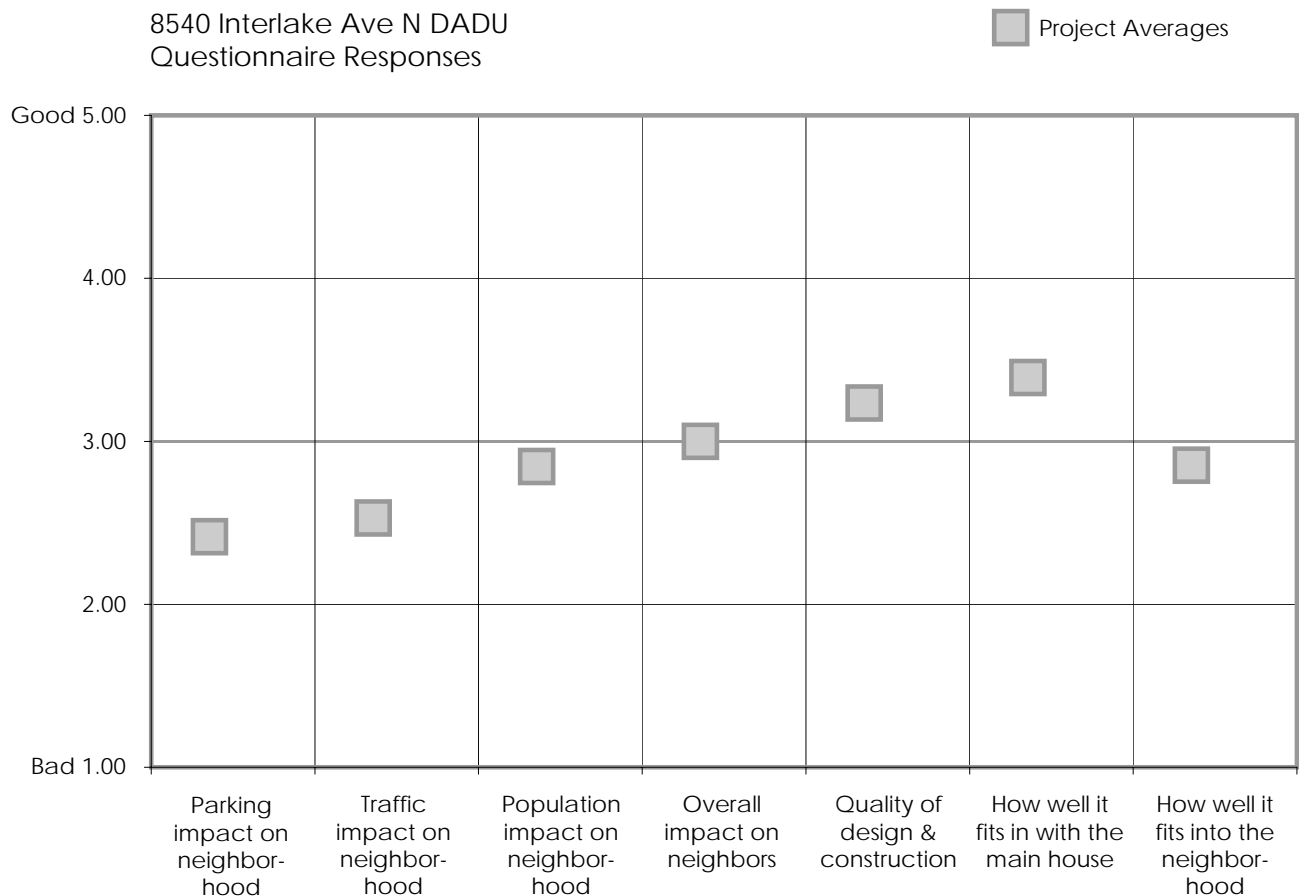
Lot Size	5,125 ft <sup>2</sup>
Lot Width	50 ft
Lot Depth	102.5 ft
Alley Width	N/A
Primary Structure Height	21 ft
Detached ADU Pitch Height	19 ft
Detached ADU Height/Lot Width Ratio	0.38
Detached ADU Base Height	14 ft
Main Structure Footprint	1,012 ft <sup>2</sup>
Detached ADU Footprint	374 ft <sup>2</sup>
Total Lot Coverage	27%
Approximate Gross Floor Area	748 ft <sup>2</sup>
Detached ADU FAR (approx.)	0.15
Minimum Side Yard Setback	4 ft
Minimum Rear Yard Setback	5 ft
Estimated Cost of Construction	\$138,800
Approx. Cost per ft <sup>2</sup> Floor Area	\$186/ft <sup>2</sup>
Land Use Permit Fees (includes Design Review)	\$1,952
Land Use Permit Fee/Est. Cost of Construction	1.4%
Building Permit Fees	\$1,316.50
Building Permit Fees/Est. Cost of Construction	1%

- The boldness of the barge boards should be emphasized.
- Increasing the overhang of the eaves, in addition to increasing the pitch would distinguish the roof in a manner similar to the main house.
- Small, vertical windows are more fitting, and it would improve the design if the square windows would match them.
- Lap siding with a horizontal distinction rather than corrugated metal with a vertical distinction should be used. A belly band could be used to separate the upper and lower materials.

- A window next to the door could be used to give an appearance of balance.
- Plantings or flower beds should be used to accentuate the entrance of the cottage.

What was the cost of construction, whether a new structure or an addition or remodel of an existing structure?

This detached ADU was designed and partially constructed by the owner (an architect), saving much money. The applicant's estimated total of his own time and construction costs is \$138,800.



Was administrative Design Review cost effective for this type of small project?

This project's land use and design review took a total of 26 hours, and the fee for this part of the review was \$1,952 (1.4% of the total cost). The building permit cost was \$1,316.50, bringing the total to \$3,268.50.

While this is a small percentage of total costs, in an interview, the owner pointed out that if he were not an architect, and it was necessary to hire one to administer the Design Review process, the fees alone for the architects time would be cost prohibitive. The owner also commented that the process was too onerous, mentioning that "it was an enormous hassle and at times I found it quite over the top in terms of the amount of administration, review/comment period and comments made by the DCLU reviewer."



*Vegetation helps screen the detached ADU from the street.*

The finished product, when compared to the original design selected among the 1998 AIA Design Demonstration Projects and the original Demonstration Program application, raises the question of when design review is appropriate, and to what extent it is appropriate when reviewing small projects such as this. It also brings to light a difficulty of the

process of the Demonstration Program, and that is the transition between project selection, and Master Use Permit application. In this case, the design selected through the Program was modified significantly during the Design Review Program.

The original design was intended to be more modern, with industrial finishes, including corrugated metal siding, a roll-up door, more discrete windows, and a second-floor sleeping loft (as opposed to a full second story). The original design was also shorter. The goal of the reviewer was to try to shape the detached ADU into a cottage with Craftsman elements.

This scenario differs greatly from the Magnolia detached ADU process, which began with a plan needing design direction. This detached ADU was designed and constructed by an architect, who lives in the primary structure. This particular design review process was not successful in changing the form of the building to look more like a cottage, but did result in changing the finishes of the original form to mimic craftsman-like elements.



*Many of the surrounding homes are rentals in this area adjacent to multifamily zoning.*



*A view of the primary structure from the street.*

## Neighborhood Sentiment

What do the neighbors think of this type of housing?

As this project replaced an existing detached ADU, it easily held neighborhood support through the Demonstration Program selection process.

Survey results show that neighborhood sentiment about the project is on the whole not as positive as the other detached ADU projects. The chart on page 47 shows how this project was rated in the surveys that were sent to neighbors within 300 feet of the project. At least two (excluded) questionnaire respondents that gave the project poor marks were unclear about the location—and in at least one case instead rated a new “skinny” house built on the next block over. Another person cited junky cars and poorly treated animals—clearly indicating that they weren’t responding to the detached ADU project at all (none of these conditions are to be found on the project site). While parking was the lowest-rated impact, the project actually added an additional off-street parking space to the neighborhood. Further, while the general population impact was also rated below average, the actual population of the neighborhood never changed as a result of this redeveloped ADU. Nevertheless, because it is difficult to sort out

which neighbors knew of the project and which didn’t, all survey responses but the two mentioned are included, perhaps unfairly impacting this project’s overall rating. And while the project has a higher relative percentage of “bad” impact ratings, a little over half of respondents still rated impacts as “neutral” or “good.”

Others that were familiar with the project liked the housing concept in general, and were very supportive in their comments, and several marked “3” for some of the questions. Neighbors familiar with the project that did not rate it well mentioned concerns with its height, privacy, increased traffic, parking, and “turning Seattle into a shanty town.” Another neighbor stated:

“Because of the huge 6 plex condos in the neighborhood, parking is at an all time premium. There are so many multiple dwelling buildings that the density is enough.”

This statement underscores the questionnaire results and comments, from which it can be surmised that in this edge area, where single family homes abut multifamily zones near Aurora Avenue, the overall impact of new development and regional growth are being felt, and the central themes are aesthetics, traffic, and parking.



*A view across the backyard from stairs of the main home.*



Were there any unintended consequences that need to be resolved?

**The neighbor adjacent to the rear of the lot wrote:**

"[The structure] has taken away my sense of privacy/ specific window placement & the design is overbearing, the effect is that of a silo on my property line - even the color it has finally been painted is a poor choice."

"Too many automobiles on this street has resulted in noise, crowding, and congestion."

"The large east window that is invasive."

"Again traffic."

**In this case, the most obvious unintended consequence is the negative impact (be it a perceived sense of privacy or real) on the adjacent neighbor along the rear property line.**

**This could potentially be resolved through the installation of a fence, or using an opaque glass in the east window (on the back of the second story of the detached ADU), or both. The owner has since installed a fence along the rear lot line, and this has helped address the privacy concerns.**

What is the reaction of the residents of the detached ADU in terms of livability of the unit and how it could be improved?

**The tenant, who has resided on the site for approximately 15 years, provided ample feedback when asked about his reaction to the livability of the unit and how it could be improved:**

"The resulting structure is one that I consider a veritable palace in comparison to the structure it replaced. There's no doubt that this is a very comfortable,

desirable place to live. The design preserves privacy very well, while not cutting off neighborly interaction. Yard sizes around the structure remain substantial and preserve the character of a "single family" neighborhood. I think that as with any home site, any given detached ADU site can be a great success or dismal failure based upon the care of the design; not only in the footprint and height, but also the placement of doors and windows (sightlines) the placement of walkways, of open space (lawns and gardens and trees), in addition to the feeling of the inside spaces and the landscape integration of the outside profiles. I'm not sure that success could ever be reliably enforced through static regulation, in many ways it's more a matter of craft and artistic concern."

**The tenant offered no specifics relating to how the unit could be improved.**



*The first floor of the detached ADU includes a kitchen and den with high-end finishes.*

## Conclusions

What were the positive results of this project? What were the negative results?

**The detached ADU in the Licton Springs neighborhood is the second tallest at 19 feet to the ridge of the roof, yet has one of the smallest footprints and the lowest floor-to-lot-area ratios (0.146) of all the reviewed detached ADUs. It uses less land and maintains more open space than the other units reviewed.**



*The upper floor of the detached ADU features a vaulted ceiling*

The design minimizes the amount of perceived bulk from the adjacent lot to the north by using a lower roof line along the side yard, while also minimizing the square footage of surface area facing the adjacent lot to the rear of the lot by using a long, skinny configuration.



*The inclusion of a fence helps minimize the impact of the new detached ADU. The neighbor's vegetation helps as well.*

If viewed from the south side of the adjacent yard to the rear, the south face of the detached ADU does seem large and intrusive. This has been mitigated by the installation of a fence, and landscaping could also help in this regard.

Did this project provide a design concept that would likely be applicable and acceptable in other neighborhoods?

While there is some concern over the scale and height of this detached ADU, it is still a positive example of small-scale infill housing. With some additional mitigation of impacts, it could be acceptable in other neighborhoods.

### Lessons Learned

Successes and issues that this project bring up that DCLU will address with a proposal for detached ADUs in single family zones include:

- the applicability of design review to projects of this size;
- requirements for matching detached ADU scale, color, and materials to the existing home versus providing flexibility to achieve a more innovative or modern design;
- ensuring a proper maximum allowed height of detached ADUs to limit perceived bulk and scale, privacy, and shadow impacts;
- landscape requirements to limit privacy impacts for detached ADUs; and
- appropriate setbacks for detached ADUs built on parcels without alleys to limit open space and privacy impacts.